

Story #227 (Milli Kütüphane Tape)

Narrator: Saliha Arel (see Notes on #117)

Location: Sivas

Date: Collected in 1950's by student of P. N. Boratav; translated in April 1962 by Neriman Hızır and Barbara K. Walker

superficial love
The Red Horse Husband Lost to and Recovered from the Other World

Tet Once there was and once there was not a padişah who had three daughters. One was the oldest, one was the youngest, and one was in the middle. Time passed, and they saw that the padişah never got them married. "Well," the three daughters said, "this will not do." So they called their servant [lala] and they said, "Please bring us three watermelons, one overripe, one ripe, and one underripe." *hazır, gürbüz*

"All right," said the servant, and brought three watermelons.

The oldest daughter said, "Now, you take these to our father."

The watermelons were taken to the padişah. "What is this?" he asked

"Open them up and see," said the servant.

They cut the watermelons, one by one. They cut the first one, and saw that it was overripe. They cut the second one, and it was just right. They cut the third one, and it was underripe. "What does all this mean?" said the padişah. "I do not understand what this means."

"Would you allow me to explain?" said the servant. "They want to get married."

"All right," said the padişah. "If it is husbands they want, you send criers out to tell everyone, rich or poor, noble or not, to come and pass in front of my balcony. I shall give a golden ball to each of my daughters, and

they may choose whichever one they want and throw the ball at him. I shall marry them to the men they want."

In the morning he had three golden balls made for them. The criers went out calling, and everybody, rich or poor, noble or not, high officials and low officials--everyone got dressed up and started parading in front of the palace. The oldest girl threw her ball to the son of the vizier. The middle one threw hers to the son of the Şeh İslam [religious leader]. The ball of the little one rolled and hit a red horse. "Oh, look! It did not work!" they cried. They brought the ball back and she threw it again. It hit the horse again. She tried the third time, and again she hit the red horse. "That is all," they said. "That decides it."

"Oh, what a pity for my youngest," said the padişah. And he got everything ready for his other daughters' weddings. When it came to the youngest, he got everything ready, but there was not any bridegroom around except a horse. In the evening when they were shown into a room, it was like a stable. "What else for a horse?" said the padişah

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed her sisters. "Yours is a horse, and ours come like lions in the evening."

But in the evening came the horse, tucker, tucker. He got into the room and closed the door. He shook himself, got out of his horse's skin, and he was as handsome a man as could be. He took his coat off and he sat down, and they were happy. He said, "Now, look. You are not going to say anything about me to your sisters. If you do, that spoils the magic, and you will lose me. Let me stay as a horse in the daytime, or you will lose me." You see, he was the fairy giant king's son.

Time passed for awhile, and her sisters kept on making fun of her. "What happened when you got married? All you got was a horse. We are having all the

fun with our husbands. But all you have is a horse, who comes tucker, tucker home in the evening." And the time came when she could not bear their teasing any more. "What makes you think he is a horse?" she said. "Some day you come and watch us through a hole. He is such a youth that he would buy fifteen of yours."

And the sisters, in the evening after the horse had gone in and locked the door, came and looked through a hole. And what they saw was a very, very handsome man, so handsome that he could say to the rising moon, "Either you or I."

*Beauty con-
fused with
that of
moon*

"Look," they said. "We thought it was a horse. Let us go and tease her."

In the morning the handsome man became a horse again and went away. The sisters said, "You are right. He is very handsome. But you have no wisdom; you have no brains. Someday you must burn that horse skin. Why have him a horse?"

no, I cannot," said the girl. "No, I cannot throw it in the fire, because it spoils the magic." But finally they convinced her.

One night when he was out of his skin and had gone to bed, she upped and grabbed the skin and threw it into the fire

"What have you done?" shouted her husband. "You have spoiled everything. You cannot have me any more." And he became a bird and flew away.

transformation

The girl cried, and ached, and beat herself. "What shall I do?" Where will I find him again?" she said. And she could not talk of anything else.

Finally she went to her father, for her father had heard about it, and she said, "If you love me, Father, get me a pair of iron shoes and an iron staff, and I shall go and look for him. I shall walk until I find him."

*Search for
lost husband?*

"You must be crazy," said her father. "You say he became a bird and flew away. Then he must be the son of the fairy giant king."

he was," said the girl. "I was happy with my husband, and I shall

look for him until I find him or die."

They could not make her listen to reason, so they gave her a pair of iron shoes and an iron staff and a bag full of gold. The padişah said, "All right. Let your road be open." And she started.

"Goodbye," she said.

She went and went, six months and one summer, straight over the rivers and over the hills, and she turned back, to see that she had gone only the length of a grain of barley. She went for months and years, and she became tired and worn out. One day she was very tired, and she sat under a tree and lifted the sole of her iron shoe, and saw there was a hole in it. "Just think!" said she. "Iron shoes so worn as to have holes!"

While she was looking at her shoes, ^{on} Prrrr came a bird and shook itself, and there was her husband.

"Oh, you came!" said the girl. "You do not know what I have suffered, and how I have walked, and I cannot bear it any longer."

"Yes," said the man, "but how shall I take you home to my country?" For it seems his mother had got him engaged to his cousin. But he prayed, and then ^{blowing} blew on the girl and turned her into an apple, and he put her in his pocket to take her home, because his mother and father were giants.

When he got into the house, his mother said, "Şah Selim, I can smell human flesh on you."

Mother, no." And he prayed and blew on the apple, and hid the girl in a corner of the cupboard.

Then came his father. He sniffed and sniffed. He said, "Woman, I smell human flesh in this house."

no," she said. "There is no human flesh here. It must be something between your teeth. Pick it out and eat it." And he picked it out and ate it

Then they sat down and ate and drank.

For a while he hid the girl. But he was engaged to his cousin, and soon to marry her. One day he said to the girl, "When my mother is kneading dough, she throws her breasts behind her over her shoulders. When she is kneading dough, you must go behind her and drink from her breasts. Then she will not kill you."

So one day when the mother was kneading dough, with her breasts thrown back over her shoulders, the girl went up behind her and drank from her breasts.

The woman turned around and saw such a beautiful girl, so beautiful as to say *Beautiful as the moon* to the moon, "Either you or I will rise." ["Bir güzel kız, bir güzel kız, doğan aya ya sen doğ ya ben."] And the woman said, "Oh, Şah Selim, this is your doing! Where did you find her?"

And Şah Selim told his mother everything.

"But," said the woman, "you are going to get married to your cousin."

"All right," said the young man. "We shall get married, and this one will be around to serve us."

"What will your father say?"

"Do not worry. I shall hide her when Father comes."

The girl worked in the house for a while. She washed and swept and cooked, and when the father came they turned her into apples and pears and put her away

When the prince was to be married, his mattresses had to be filled with feathers. The mother gave the mattress covers to the girl and said, "Now, you take these and fill them with birds' feathers to the very brim, and bring them back."

The girl began to cry. "Where shall I find so many feathers in a strange land?" When she was crying like that, Şah Selim came, and she said, "Why should I not cry? Your mother wanted me to fill two mattresses with birds' feathers, and how can I?"

what is easier?" he said. "Stop worrying. You go to the top of that hill and cry out three times, "Şah Selim is dead. Şah Selim is dead. Şah Selim is dead.' When you say that, all the birds in the world will come and shed their feathers in sorrow. Then you will fill the mattresses, and what is lighter than that? Fill them and carry them down." The mother had planned to have the girl killed if she could not fill the mattress covers, but her son knew this, and so he helped the girl.

She went to the top of the hill, and cried out three times, "Şah Selim is dead. Şah Selim is dead. Şah Selim is dead." And all the birds in the world came Prrrr prrrr prrrr flying there, beating their feathers and shedding them for sorrow. She gathered the feathers up and put them into the mattress covers, tied them up, and took them down the hill.

The mother said, "Hmmm, she did it. It is Şah Selim's doing again. Then she said to the girl, "Go and bring the bread griddle from the aunt's house. We are going to make bread."

And the girl began to cry, for it seems there were horses and dogs and catching doors on the way there. She cried and cried.

Şah Selim came, and said, "What is wrong, my princess?"

"Your mother told me to bring the bread griddle from the aunt's house How can I? I am afraid, and I am crying."

it is easy," he said. "You do not have to cry. This is what you have to do. You close the open door and open the closed door. There is a dog with grass in front of him, and there is a horse with meat in front of him. You take the grass from the dog and give it to the horse, and you take the meat from the horse and give it to the dog. Then run and get the griddle from behind the door and come back without being seen by anyone."

"All right," she said, and she went. She closed the open door and opened

the closed door. There was a heap of grass in front of the dog and a heap of meat in front of the horse. She gave the meat to the dog and the grass to the horse. Then she grabbed the griddle from behind the door. But when she was running away, the aunt saw her and screamed, "Catch her, you dog!"

The dog said, "Why should I? All this time I had the heap of grass before me. Does a dog eat grass? I shall not catch her."

"You, horse, catch her!" screamed the aunt.

"No, I will not. Does a horse eat meat? Only she gave me the grass."

"Door, you catch her!" shouted the aunt.

The door said, "No. All my life I lived closed, and she opened me."

"You other door, you catch her!" screamed the aunt.

And the other door said, "No. Why should I catch her? All the while I stood open, and she closed me. I will not catch her."

So the girl brought the griddle home. "Oh," Şah Selim's mother said.

"You got through that, too. It is Şah Selim's doing again."

Now it was time for the wedding of Şah Selim and his cousin. The girl was very sad, but what could she do? She loved her husband, and she kept quiet. She never said anything, and the wedding was finished and the bride was brought. The padişah's daughter was watching the bride from behind the door, when the mother said, "Come out here." And she took ten candles and stuck them on all ten of the girl's fingers, and she said, "You are going to hold these for the bride all night. You will hold these until the morning."

The girl said, "Yes," but she cried and cried, with her two eyes like two fountains. "What will happen to me? When the wax melts, it is going to burn my fingers!"

"What could be easier than that?" said Şah Selim. "You will let the candles stand on your fingers until the wax melts and your fingers become hot. Then you

will press your hands on the bride's face and smear the wax on her. I shall be behind the door, and the horses will be waiting to carry us away. We shall run away. Did you think I was going to marry her? It was all because of the fear of my mother."

Finally they brought the bride in, and they put the candles on the girl's fingers. The wax began to melt and to burn her fingers. She pressed them down on the bride's face. And there was Şah Selim behind the door. They got on the horses and they rode away. They went a little; they went far. They went six months and a summer. They went straight over rivers and over hills, and they turned and looked to see that they had gone only the length of a grain of barley. Now let us come back to the house.

*fourth
evening*

In the morning the father came and wanted to see the son and the bride. As to the girl, they took it for granted that she was dead. When they came to the chamber, what did they find? The bride had fainted, with wax all over her face, and the padişah's daughter was nowhere to be found. They looked for the boy, and the boy was nowhere. "Woe is me!" said the father. And he wrapped himself in clouds and followed after the boy. And he advanced with a sound like thunder.

"Woe is me!" said Şah Selim. "My father is coming. What shall I do?"

"Do what you can," said the girl.

"This is what I am going to do," said Şah Selim. "I shall make you a deaf gardener, and I shall make myself a vegetable garden. He will come and look around. And you will not say anything except that you will ask him what vegetables he wants." And he prayed and blew on the girl, and she became a deaf gardener, and he turned into a vegetable garden.

transformation

The father came, and he understood, of course. "What shall I do now?" he said. "If I pick one vegetable, it may be Şah Selim. If I take something else,

it will be Şah Selim. How can I touch anything? Oh, you--the son of the unbeliever!" "What do you sell?" he said to the gardener

And the girl (who was a man now), said, "Hnnh? What do you want? Do you cabbages or tomatoes or lettuce?"

"This is not what I said," said the father. "I did not say that. Did a girl and a boy pass this way?"

The girl said, "I do not know."

And the father turned back.

started on their way. On their way they heard another noise, burul, gurul, gurul, gurul, like a black cloud coming after them.

"That is my mother," said Şah Selim. "She is worse. What shall I do?"

"Do what you like," said the girl.

"This is what I shall do," said the prince. "I shall make you a stick, ^{transformer} and I shall be a serpent wound around the stick. We shall lie down on this road." And that was what they did. He prayed and blew on the girl, and she became a stick on the road, and he became a serpent and wound himself around and around the stick

When the mother saw them, of course, being a fairy she knew what they were. She had a big knife in her hand, and she wanted to break the stick "But if I strike here, it is Şah Selim. If I strike there, it is Şah Selim. Oh, you--daughter of the unbeliever! No part of her is out in the open so I can cut her!" And the mother went back, crying.

They started running again, and they ran and ran and ran until they came to the padişah's daughter's country. They found that her father had become blind from grief over his daughter. They went and told him that his son-in-law and daughter were back. He was very happy to have them back, and he prepared a

new wedding for them that lasted forty days and forty nights.

The son-in-law made a magic medicine for his father-in-law for his eyes,
Cure
so he could see again. And they lived happily until they died.